

SHOWCASE EUROPE

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Sale of Swiss Aircraft Manufacturer - Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. remains under Swiss Control

Sandor Galambos
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Summary: Unaxis Holding Ltd., which emerged from the former Oerlikon-Buehrle Group, announced on December 21, 2000 that it signed a contract with a group, consisting of predominantly Swiss investors, for the take-over of its wholly-owned subsidiary Pilatus Aircraft Ltd., headquartered in Stans, Nidwalden. This move came in the wake of an intensive two-year search for a new owner. The closing of the transaction is expected for the end of January 2001, after which time, the parties involved will divulge the sales price. The new owners are committed to further developing Pilatus and to listing the company on the (Swiss) stock exchange in a few years. End Summary.

Due to carefully and professionally worked out sales procedure, Unaxis's Chairman and CEO Dr. Willy Kissling was pleased to have identified a "Swiss solution" for the only Swiss aircraft manufacturer. The sale is viewed to be in the interest of the customers and employees alike and conducive to the prosperity of the Canton (State) of Nidwalden. The investor group to encompass, among others, the "Roche Pensionskasse" and the private bank IHAG Holding, vowed to retain all 1,100 employees at the various sites. Prior to sealing the deal with the Swiss investor group, numerous potential foreign buyers expressed genuine interest in the Swiss plane maker, but were unable to give guarantees as to the retention of jobs. It is the declared goal of the future owners to continue to build Pilatus aircraft at its present base.

If growth and prosperity continue in the years lying ahead, "going public" is believed to pave the way for above-average returns. After trying years, with orders hitting rock-bottom, the Pilatus outfit has meanwhile regained its strength and has successfully solidified its position on the world market.

Pilatus Aircraft Ltd., which has 1,000 individuals on its payroll at its production facility at Stans, is the leading manufacturer of single-engine turboprop aircraft worldwide and a major player among the European aviation industry. It has two subsidiaries located in Broomfield, Colorado (Pilatus Business Aircraft) and in Canberra, Australia (Pilatus Australia), respectively, as well as TSA Transairco S.A., headquartered at Switzerland's second largest

international airport -- the Geneva Cointrin Airport. The Geneva-based company is entrusted to perform maintenance related work on business jets.

In 1999, Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. generated sales of approximately Swiss francs 435 million (\$ 264 million). The superior sales figures can chiefly be ascribed to robust growth encountered over the past years. By contrast, back in 1993, turnover was assessed at SFr. 158 million (\$ 95 million). The year 2000 also posed a financial windfall for the Swiss company. At the end of the third quarter of the year, orders secured had skyrocketed by 64 percent to SFr. 492 million (\$ 298 million), while sales soared by 20 percent to SFr. 299 million (\$ 181 million) compared with previous year data. The three business units e.g. Government Aviation (training aircraft), General Aviation (PC-12) and Maintenance, the company is expected, for the first time, to record a turnover of more than SFr. 500 million (over \$ 305 million), thereby underpinning the company's ascendancy to prominence on the international platform.

Used in civil aviation, the introduction of the PC-12 aircraft, in particular, of which over 300 units have been sold worldwide thus far, helped propel the company to international recognition -- a critical move for the company to diversify its product line and to disengage from the inherently volatile business of training aircraft (budgetary cuts prevalent in the defense industry in key markets are partly responsible for the volatility). With more than 100 PC-12s sold during the year 2000 and the ordering books brimful, the plane maker is planning to increase its employment body in the months ahead so as to handle growth. The next milestone is expected at the end of 2001 with the launch of the PC-21 project -- a new, high-tech training aircraft that has already passed more than half of its development phase.

The sale of Pilatus represents a further step for Unaxis to transform an enterprise, formerly known as an industrial conglomerate, into a high-tech outfit. Unaxis is a leading provider of equipment and services for the information technology industry, with particular emphasis placed upon semiconductors, data storage, flat panel displays, and optical components. The divestiture of several companies will allow Unaxis to fully concentrate on the implementation of its strategy as an information technology corporation and to pursue its ambitious growth and performance targets more aggressively.

This report was generated by:

Zurich America Center
Mr. Sandor Galambos

U.S. Commercial Service
Dufourstrasse 101
8008 Zurich, Switzerland
Tel: (+41-1)422-2372
Fax: (+41-1)382-2655
E-mail: Sandor.Galambos@mail.doc.gov
Website: www.uscom.ch

IMI Customer Satisfaction Survey

U.S. Department of Commerce
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The Commercial Service

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1. Country covered by report: _____

Industry/title: _____

Commerce domestic office that assisted you (if applicable):

2. How did you find out about the IMI service?

- ☐ Direct mail
- ☐ Recommended by another firm
- ☐ Recommended by Commerce staff
- ☐ Trade/state/private newsletter
- ☐ Department of Commerce newsletter
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

3. Please indicate the extent to which your objectives were satisfied:

- 1-Very satisfied
- 2-Satisfied
- 3-Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4-Dissatisfied
- 5-Very dissatisfied
- 6-Not applicable

- ☐ Overall objectives
- ☐ Accuracy of information

- ☐ Completeness of information
- ☐ Clarity of information
- ☐ Relevance of information
- ☐ Follow-up by Commerce representative

4. In your opinion, did using the IMI service facilitate any of the following?

- ☐ Decided to enter or increase presence in market
- ☐ Developed an export marketing plan
- ☐ Added to knowledge of country/industry
- ☐ Corroborated market data from other sources
- ☐ Decided to bypass or reduce presence in market
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

5. How likely would you be to use the IMI service again?

- ☐ Definitely would
- ☐ Probably would
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Probably would not
- ☐ Definitely would not

6. Comments:

* * * About Your Firm * * *

1. Number of employees: ☐ 1-99 ☐ 100-249 ☐ 250-499
☐ 500-999 ☐ 1,000+

2. Location (abbreviation of your state only): _____

3. Business activity (check one):

- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Service
- ☐ Agent, broker, manufacturer's representative
- ☐ Export management or trading company
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

4. Value of export shipments over the past 12 months:

- ☐ Less than \$10K
- ☐ \$11K-\$100K
- ☐ \$101K-\$500K
- ☐ \$501K-\$999K
- ☐ \$1M-\$5M
- ☐ More than \$5M

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Contact name: _____

Phone: _____

Fax number: _____
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Thank you--we value your input!

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